

Me Without You

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Me Without You

Will's fingers stroked mine as the woman dressed in pastels explained the procedure once more to the grief-stricken family.

"It will take about ten minutes for William to fall asleep and his time of death will be approximately fifteen minutes after that. You're welcome to stay here as long as you like but eventually we will have to..." I felt my focus drifting as I looked at the Traynors' faces. Georgina's eyes were rimmed with red and her olive colouring was pale. She shook gently as she held her knees, undoubtedly holding in sobs. Will's parents couldn't have looked any further apart - Mrs Traynor stood on the opposite side of Will's bed, her hand resting on his shoulder, face grim, while Mr Traynor stood in the corner of the comfortable room, hands folded and looking withdrawn. I couldn't help but wonder what would happen tomorrow or in a week or a month. Would Will's death pull them apart? Would Della?

"If everybody is ready, I'll proceed," the woman offered. I felt Will's eyes on me as the woman waited for Will's approval. He squeezed my fingers and nodded to the woman who left the room.

"Will," Mrs Traynor's voice pleaded once more. It sounded as if she had aged ten years, her voice tired and hollow. "Please." Will didn't falter for a moment with his reply.

"It's my choice." He looked around his family and smirked halfheartedly. "It looks like somebody has died in here." Georgina let out a small sob at that and Mr Traynor placed his arm around her, pulling his daughter to him. I laughed for Will's benefit but I felt tears begin to prick in my eyes and Mrs Traynor has become so pale that I feared she might faint. The woman returned with a cup of milky

solution and a bright pink straw and handed it to me.

"I'll be back in thirty minutes," she smiled gently at me, rubbing my arm. I held the cup in my arm and looked at Mrs Traynor who had sat down, staring at the floor and holding her head in her hands. I had never seen her so vulnerable. Georgina had been unable to control her tears and was crying into Mr Traynor's business shirt and he had red eyes also.

"Alright Clark," Will caught my attention with a small smile. "Your last job as my employee." I sat beside him and tried not to spill the liquid as my hands shook. "Oh, Lou," he murmured. "Hold my hand." I took his hand in my own as tears pricked up in his eyes.

"I'm going to miss you so much," I whispered to him as he started to cry.

I could have made him so happy. I wanted to scream at him, to tell him that he owed me another six months, to tell him that he could book his appointment again. I wanted to sob that if he died, I wanted to die too. But mostly, I wanted to hold him. I wanted to pull myself to him and kiss him and remember every atom of his body. But I knew none of these things would convince him to stay with him. _I'm not enough._

I pulled my hand away from his and wiped his face, leaving it on his cheek. He closed his eyes and pushed his head into my hand. "Let's do this, Clark." I pulled myself together, feeling oddly numb as I lifted the straw to his mouth. He sucked until the last drop of the solution was gone and he exhaled, eyes holding mine.

Mrs Traynor stood up and began speaking to Will, stroking his face and kissing his forehead. I left Will to sit a little away as the family said their goodbyes. Georgina couldn't even speak, just wrapped her arms around her brother and sobbed as he whispered of childhood memories into her ear. Mr Traynor held his son's hand in his own and said nothing, the silence filled with what needed to be said. Minutes passed quickly and Will's eyes began to flutter. The Traynors' moved away and Will called me over.

"Come lie with me," he murmured as sleep began to come over him. I wrapped myself around him, holding his hands in my own as his glistening blue eyes leaked their final tears. "I love you so much Clark."

And with that, his eyes shut and his breathing shallowed into a deep sleep.

I realised I'd never see those eyes again, never see him smile again, never hear his voice. I clung to him, trying to take in his scent and the way his hands felt in mine. Trying to remember for the sleepless nights to come.

When his breathing stopped and I could no longer hear the beat of his heart, I sobbed. I had to live without Will Traynor. I'd had six months with the man I loved and those beautiful months were over.

End

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